

Instructional Coordinators

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Significant Points

- Many instructional coordinators are former teachers or principals.
- A bachelor's degree is the minimum educational requirement; however, a graduate degree is preferred.
- The need to update and improve educational standards will create more demand for instructional coordinators to train teachers and develop new materials.

Nature of the Work

Instructional coordinators, also known as curriculum specialists, staff development specialists, or directors of instructional material, play a large role in improving the quality of education in the classroom. They develop instructional materials, train teachers, and assess educational programs in terms of quality and adherence to regulations and standards. They also assist in implementing new technology in the classroom. Instructional coordinators often specialize in specific subjects, such as language arts, mathematics, social studies, gifted and talented, or English as a Second Language.

Instructional coordinators evaluate how well a school's curriculum meets students' needs. They research teaching methods and techniques and develop procedures to determine whether program goals are being met. To aid in their evaluation, they may meet with members of educational committees and advisory groups to learn about subjects—English, history, or mathematics, for example—and to relate curriculum materials to these subjects, to students' needs, and to occupations for which these subjects are good preparation. They also may develop questionnaires and interview school staff about the curriculum. Based on their research and observations of instructional practice, they recommend instruction and curriculum improvements.

Another duty instructional coordinators have is to review textbooks, software, and other educational materials and make recommendations on purchases. They monitor materials ordered and the ways in which teachers use them in the classroom. They also supervise workers who catalogue, distribute, and maintain a school's educational materials and equipment.

Instructional coordinators find effective ways to use technology to enhance student learning. They monitor the introduction of new technology, including the Internet, into a school's curriculum. In addition, instructional coordinators might recommend installing educational computer software, such as interactive books and exercises designed to enhance student literacy and develop math skills. Instructional coordinators may invite experts—such as computer hardware, software, and library or media specialists—into the classroom to help integrate technological materials into a school's curriculum.

Many instructional coordinators plan and provide onsite education for teachers and administrators. They may train teachers about the use of materials and equipment or help them to improve their skills. Instructional coordinators also mentor new teachers and train experienced ones in the latest instructional methods. This role becomes especially important when a school district introduces new content, program innovations, or different organizational structure. For example, when a State or school district introduces standards or tests that must be met by students in order to pass to the next grade, instructional coordinators often must advise teachers on the



Instructional coordinators review textbooks and other educational materials to see if they meet curriculum standards.

content of the standards and provide instruction on implementing the standards in the classroom.

Working Conditions

Instructional coordinators, including those employed by school districts, work year round, usually in comfortable offices or classrooms. Some spend much of their time traveling between schools meeting with teachers and administrators. The opportunity to shape and improve instructional curricula and work in an academic environment can be satisfying. However, some instructional coordinators find the work stressful because the occupation requires continual accountability to school administrators and, occasionally, long hours.

Employment

Instructional coordinators held about 81,000 jobs in 2000. Two in three worked in public and private education, which includes elementary, secondary, and technical schools and colleges and universities. Another 1 in 10 worked for Departments of Education in State and local governments. The remainder worked primarily in management and public relations establishments, in which they did educational consulting and developed instructional materials sold to schools; and in child daycare services.

Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

The minimum educational requirement for instructional coordinators is a bachelor's degree, usually in education. Most employers, however, prefer candidates with a master's degree or higher, either in a field such as curriculum and instruction, educational technology, or instructional technology, or in an instructional content area, such as mathematics. Instructional coordinators must have a good understanding of how to teach specific groups of students, in addition to expertise in developing educational materials. Therefore, several years of teaching experience is, although not mandatory, highly desirable. Experience in an administrative position, such as principal or assistant principal, also is beneficial.

Courses in curriculum development and evaluation, research design, and computer literacy are recommended. Moreover, instructional coordinators usually are required to take continuing education courses to keep their skills current. Courses may include teacher evaluation techniques, curriculum training, new teacher induction, consulting and teacher support, and observation and analysis of teaching.

Instructional coordinators must be able to make sound decisions about curriculum options and to organize and coordinate work efficiently. They should have strong interpersonal and communi-

cation skills. Familiarity with computer technology also is important for instructional coordinators, who are increasingly involved in gathering and coordinating technical information for students and teachers.

Depending on experience and educational attainment, instructional coordinators may advance to higher positions in a school system, or to management or executive positions in private industry.

Job Outlook

Employment of instructional coordinators is expected to grow faster than the average for all occupations through the year 2010. Rising school enrollments, more student services, and a continuing emphasis on improving the quality of education will spur demand. Instructional coordinators will be instrumental in developing new curricula to meet the demands of a changing society and in training the teacher workforce. As more States institute standards for different grade levels, coordinators will be needed to incorporate the standards into curriculums and make sure teachers and administrators are informed of the changes.

Instructional coordinators also will be needed to provide classes on using technology in the classroom, to keep teachers up-to-date on changes in their fields, and to demonstrate new teaching techniques. Professional training for teachers will grow in importance as more individuals enter the teaching profession without an education background or experience.

Job growth for instructional coordinators also will stem from the increasing emphasis on lifelong learning and on programs for students with special needs, including those for whom English is a second language. These students often require more educational resources and consolidated planning and management within the educational system.

Earnings

Median annual earnings of instructional coordinators in 2000 were \$44,230. The middle 50 percent earned between \$32,150 and \$58,480. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$24,370, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$72,020.

Related Occupations

Instructional coordinators are professionals involved in education and training and development, which requires organizational, administrative, teaching, research, and communication skills. Occupations with similar characteristics include preschool, kindergarten, elementary, middle, and secondary school teachers; postsecondary teachers; education administrators; counselors; and human resources, training, and labor relations managers and specialists.

Sources of Additional Information

Information on requirements and job opportunities for instructional coordinators is available from local school systems and State departments of education.

Librarians

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Significant Points

- A master's degree in library science usually is required; special librarians often need an additional graduate or professional degree.
- Applicants for librarian jobs in large cities or suburban areas will face competition, while those willing to work in rural areas should have better job prospects.

Nature of the Work

The traditional concept of a library is being redefined from a place to access paper records or books, to one which also houses the most advanced mediums, including CD-ROM, the Internet, virtual libraries, and remote access to a wide range of resources. Consequently, librarians increasingly are combining traditional duties with tasks involving quickly changing technology. Librarians assist people in finding information and using it effectively for personal and professional purposes. Librarians must have knowledge of a wide variety of scholarly and public information sources, and follow trends related to publishing, computers, and the media to effectively oversee the selection and organization of library materials. They manage staff and develop and direct information programs and systems for the public to ensure information is organized to meet users' needs.

Most librarian positions incorporate three aspects of library work: User services, technical services, and administrative services. Even librarians specializing in one of these areas perform other responsibilities. Librarians in user services, such as reference and children's librarians, work with the public to help them find the information they need. This involves analyzing users' needs to determine what information is appropriate, and searching for, acquiring, and providing information. It also includes an instructional role, such as showing users how to access information. For example, librarians commonly help users navigate the Internet, showing them how to most efficiently search for relevant information. Librarians in technical services, such as acquisitions and cataloguing, acquire and prepare materials for use and often do not deal directly with the public. Librarians in administrative services oversee the management and planning of libraries, negotiate contracts for services, materials, and equipment, supervise library employees, perform public relations and fundraising duties, prepare budgets, and direct activities to ensure that everything functions properly.

In small libraries or information centers, librarians usually handle all aspects of the work. They read book reviews, publishers' announcements, and catalogues to keep up with current literature and other available resources, and select and purchase materials from publishers, wholesalers, and distributors. Librarians prepare new materials by classifying them by subject matter, and describe books and other library materials so they are easy to find. They supervise assistants who prepare cards, computer records, or other access tools that direct users to resources. In large libraries, librarians often specialize in a single area, such as acquisitions, cataloguing, bibliography, reference, special collections, or administration. Teamwork is increasingly important to ensure quality service to the public.

Librarians also compile lists of books, periodicals, articles, and audiovisual materials on particular subjects; analyze collections; and recommend materials. They collect and organize books, pamphlets, manuscripts, and other materials in a specific field, such as rare books, genealogy, or music. In addition, they coordinate programs such as storytelling for children, and literacy skills and book talks for adults; conduct classes; publicize services; provide reference help; write grants; and oversee other administrative matters.

Librarians are classified according to the type of library in which they work—public libraries, school library media centers, academic libraries, and special libraries. Some librarians work with specific groups, such as children, young adults, adults, or the disadvantaged. In school library media centers, librarians help teachers develop curricula, acquire materials for classroom instruction, and sometimes team-teach.

Librarians also work in information centers or libraries maintained by government agencies, corporations, law firms, advertising agencies, museums, professional associations, medical centers, hospitals, religious organizations, and research laboratories. They build and arrange an organization's information resources, which usually